2018 Dirty Dozen Report
Media Call
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What’s dirtier? Georgia’s Water or Georgia’s Politics?

10 days in March provide the answer...
March 20: Fish Kill Caused by Dawsonville Chicken Plant Exposes Lack of Environmental Funding

Chemical spill that could have been prevented killed 8,262 fish including 1,990 federally protected Cherokee darters.

It will take Georgia EPD's two and a half industrial stormwater 22 years to inspect all of Georgia’s 2800 industrial facilities.

EPD’s budget is 21 percent less than it was 13 years ago.

For More Information Contact: Jesse Demonbreun-Chapman, Coosa River Basin Initiative, 706-232-2724, jesse@coosa.org
March 27: DNR Board Votes to Weaken Clean Water Laws to Protect Corporate Polluter

When EPD loses clean water lawsuit, the agency and DNR Board change the rules to protect the Rayonier AM pulp mill in Jesup.

DNR Board includes a manager at Rayonier AM’s Jesup mill.

Rule change exposes all of Georgia’s waterways to the kind of pollution damaging the Altamaha River.

For More Information Contact:
Hutton Brown, Southern Environmental Law Center, 404-521-9900, hbrown@selcga.org
Jen Hilburn, Altamaha Riverkeeper, 912-441-3908, jen@altamahariverkeeper.org
March 29: General Assembly fails to protect funding for clean community programs.

HR 158, a measure to ensure Hazardous Waste and Solid Waste Trust Funds are correctly appropriated stalls in Senate Appropriations Committee

HWTF & SWTF collect $21 million from citizens in 2017, but only $6.8 million given to fund clean community programs.

At current funding, it will take 176 years to cleanup the state’s hazardous waste sites.

For More Information Contact:
Jesse Demonbreun-Chapman, Coosa River Basin Initiative, 706-232-2724, jesse@coosa.org
March 29: Sweetheart Deal Secured for Coal Ash Producers in Last Minutes of General Assembly

Georgia Power Company lobbyists persuade legislators to leave landfill tipping fees for toxic coal ash at $1 per ton while the household garbage rate increases to $2.50.

A potential $12 million windfall for Georgia Power.

A potential loss of $2 million annually for two rural Georgia counties.

An invitation for out-of-state coal ash to continue flowing to Georgia landfills.

For More Information Contact:
Kevin Jeselnik, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, 404-924-4508, kjeselnik@chattahoochee.org
Legislative Inaction Leaves a Bedrock Clean Water Law in Limbo

For three years, the General Assembly has failed to take action to ensure that all of Georgia’s water bodies are protected by a natural buffer as required by state law.

Inadequate language in the state’s stream buffer law leads to EPD not to enforcing the law on all water bodies.

Study committee created by legislature in 2017 concluded with a recommendation for more study.

For More Information Contact:
Chris Manganiello, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, 404-352-9828,
cmanganiello@chattahoochee.org
Launch Pad to No Where Threatens Cumberland, Little Cumberland Islands

Proposed Camden County rocket launching facility could force regular evacuations of barrier islands that help generate $86.9 million through tourism and recreation.

Would be only facility in the country to launch rockets over such an inhabited and heavily-used area.

Aerospace business experts critical of the plan.

$5 million in local tax funds already invested.

For More Information Contact: Megan Desrosiers, One Hundred Miles, 912-223-8608, megan@onehundredmiles.org
Gov. Deal’s Silence on Offshore Drilling Betrays Coastal Communities

Trump Administration proposal to drill for oil on Atlantic Coast opposed by all but two governors: Maine’s Gov. Paul LePage and Gov. Nathan Deal.

Coastal legislators, local officials oppose offshore drilling.

Some 5,000 Georgians have signed petition opposing offshore drilling.

Exploration threatens wildlife, tourism and seafood industries.

For More Information Contact:
Alice Miller Keyes, One Hundred Miles, 912-230-6494, alice@onehundredmiles.org
Sea Island Plan to Build on “The Spit” Flirts With Disaster

Plan to build eight luxury homes on narrow spit of barrier island requires construction of rock groin and dredging of sand from ocean floor.

Plan could cause erosion of nearby public beaches.

Existing groin has caused erosion of the very beach Sea Island plans to “rebuild.”

For More Information Contact:
Bill Sapp, Southern Environmental Law Center, 404-521-9900, bsapp@selcga.org
Nuclear Money Pit Saddles Taxpayers, Ratepayers with Billions. If Built, Water Demands Would Stress Savannah River

Georgia Power Company’s Vogtle nuclear power expansion on the Savannah River is $14 billion over budget and only half complete.

Ratepayers are bearing the costs, paying on average an extra $10 per month since 2011.

If two new reactors become operational, Plant Vogtle will consume enough water to supply more than 1.1 million Georgians with drinking water.

For More Information Contact:
Sara Barczak, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, 912-201-0354, sara@cleanenergy.org
Tonya Bonitatibus, Savannah Riverkeeper, 706-826-8991, riverkeeper@savannahriverkeeper.org
Mark Woodall, Sierra Club, 706-674-2242, woodallmark8@gmail.com
Colleen Kiernan, Georgia Conservation Voters, 678-304-9539, colleen@gaconservationvoters.org
Georgia Power is excavating coal ash at other facilities and placing the toxic waste in lined landfills, but at Plant Scherer near Macon, the company plans to leave the 553-acre ash pond in place with its 15.4 million tons of coal ash.

Tests show toxins in groundwater around the Scherer ash pond, including hexavalent chromium.

Georgia Power is leaving ash ponds in place at facilities near Newnan, Carrollton, Rome, and Atlanta as well.

For More Information Contact:
Jen Hilburn, Altamaha Riverkeeper, 912-441-3908, jen@altamahariverkeeper.org
Jennette Gayer, Environment Georgia, 404-370-1764, jennette@environmentgeorgia.org
Walton County proposes taking as much as 60 million gallons a day from the small Apalachee River to fill the already full Hard Labor Creek drinking water reservoir that nobody is using.

Surrounding counties already have adequate water supplies for several decades.

Withdrawal could harm rare fish and downstream property owners.

For More Information Contact:
Amy Lanclos, Greater Apalachee River Community, 706-705-2135, greaterapalacheerivercommunity@gmail.com
Federal proposal will weaken the Clean Water Act by limiting which water bodies are protected.

Plan will result in 56 percent of Georgia’s stream miles (especially smaller streams) losing existing protections under the Clean Water Act.

Small streams feed the big rivers where Georgians get their drinking water and where Georgians generate some $4.6 billion in economic activity annually through wildlife-related recreation like fishing.

For More Information Contact:
Bill Sapp, Southern Environmental Law Center, 404-521-9900, bsapp@selcga.org
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2018 Introduction

Flat Creek: Chemical spill kills mountain stream and endangered species; highlights weak state oversight of industrial sites. (Dawsonville/Dawson County)

Altamaha River: Department of Natural Resources Board changes clean water rules to defend polluter (Jesup/Wayne County)

Georgia’s Public Health: Legislators divert funds intended for clean community programs. (Statewide)

Georgia’s Drinking Water: Powerful lobbyists secure loophole inviting out-of-state coal ash to Georgia landfills (Cherokee, Meriwether, Banks, Taylor, Chatham and Charlton counties)

Georgia’s Streams and Rivers: Legislators fail to protect vulnerable Georgia streams. (Statewide)

Cumberland Island: Proposed spaceport threatens premiere barrier islands (Camden County)

Georgia’s Coast: Gov. Nathan Deal’s silence on federal proposal to drill for oil off Georgia’s coast betrays coastal communities. (Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn and Camden counties)

Georgia’s Coast: Shoreline engineering project for luxury development threatens neighboring beaches and wildlife (Brunswick, Glynn County)

Savannah River: Nuclear money pit saddles taxpayers, utility ratepayers with billions. (Waynesboro/Burke County)

Ocmulgee River, Lake Juliette and Groundwater: Coal ash pond at Plant Scherer pollutes groundwater, threatens nearby surface water (Monroe County)

Apalachee River: Unnecessary drinking water intake threatens flows, fish and property owners (Walton, Morgan and Greene counties)

Georgia’s Wetlands: Federal assault on Clean Water Act threatens Georgia’s water. (Statewide)

Updates on 2017 Dirty Dozen